



Hadith and Social Media: Challenges in Disseminating Religious Information in the Digital Era

M. Munif

Institut Agama Islam Faqih Asy'ari (IAIFA) Kediri
janoko01.2223@gmail.com

| Keyword | Abstract |
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| Hadith, social media, digital literacy | This study discusses the dissemination of hadith on social media and its implications for the religious understanding of Muslims in the digital era. The background of this research stems from the massive phenomenon of hadith distribution through various social media platforms, which is not always accompanied by a process of scientific verification. The aim of this study is to analyze the forms of hadith dissemination on social media and examine its impact on the religious understanding of Muslims. This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research method sourced from books, scientific journals, hadith collections, and relevant digital literature. The data are analyzed using content analysis techniques to identify the patterns, forms, and implications of hadith dissemination in digital spaces. Research results show that the spread of hadith on social media occurs in various forms, such as visual content, chain messages, short videos, digital dawah accounts, content reposts, integration into motivational content, as well as support from social media algorithms. The implications of this phenomenon include the expansion of access to religious information, increased risk of misinformation, a shift in scholarly authority, the strengthening of digital literacy, and the simplification of hadith understanding. This study confirms that social media has a dual role as an effective means of dawah while also being a potential source of distortion in religious understanding if not accompanied by adequate scientific verification. Therefore, it is necessary to enhance digital religious literacy and the active involvement of Islamic scholarly authorities in managing the spread of hadith in the digital era. |

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought about significant changes in various aspects of human life, including the dissemination of religious information (Wachukwu, 2024; Zhao, 2019). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and WhatsApp have become primary platforms for people to access, share, and consume religious information (Buton & Herlin, 2024). Hadith, as a secondary source of Islamic teachings, have also been affected by this digitalization. Much hadith content is now disseminated rapidly without adequate academic verification. This

has made hadith one of the most frequently circulated forms of religious information on social media. However, not all hadith have clear sources or levels of authenticity. This situation poses a serious challenge for Muslims in understanding and practicing religious teachings correctly.

On the other hand, social media is characterized by its rapid speed, openness, and ease of access to anyone without the constraints of time and space. This characteristic makes the dissemination of hadith information massive, but it is also vulnerable to distortion of meaning (Dasrizal et al., 2025; Fauzi et al., 2022). Many social media users share hadith without citing their source texts or their degree of authenticity. In fact, it is not uncommon to find fabricated or weak hadith being widely disseminated and perceived as truth. This situation is exacerbated by the low level of digital religious literacy among the general public (D. H. A. Putra & others, 2025). As a result, understanding of hadith is incomplete and potentially leads to errors in religious practice. Therefore, social media is a paradoxical space: both beneficial and risky.

In an academic, the study of hadith has undergone significant methodological developments. Classical scholars formulated the science of *musthalah hadith* to test the validity of narrations, including the classification of *sahih*, *hasan*, and *daif*. However, the challenges of the digital era demand a new approach to understanding the dissemination of hadith in the modern public sphere. The process of verifying hadith is no longer confined to academic settings or Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), but must also penetrate the digital realm. This is crucial to prevent the spread of inaccurate information on social media. Integration between classical hadith science and digital technology is an urgent need. Thus, hadith studies are not only normative but also contextual to current developments.

The phenomenon of the spread of hadith on social media is also closely related to internet users' information consumption behavior (Hidayaturrahman et al., 2019). Many users tend to share religious content without double-checking the source. This suggests that emotional aspects often outweigh rational and scientific aspects in the dissemination of information. Hadith containing motivational or inspirational messages are more easily spread virally than those with a scientific and contextual nature. This situation creates a selective selection of information that is not always based on academic truth. As a result,

the digital space becomes fertile ground for religious misinformation. This situation demands collective awareness regarding the wise use of social media.

Furthermore, the role of educators, preachers, and religious institutions is crucial in addressing these challenges. They serve not only as transmitters of religious teachings but also as guardians of the authenticity of religious information in the digital space. Hadith literacy education needs to be strengthened so that the public can distinguish between authentic hadith and invalid information. Strengthening the digital-based Islamic education curriculum is also a strategic solution. This way, the public will not only be consumers of information but also be able to filter religious content. Collaboration between religious scholars, academics, and digital media practitioners is essential. This aims to create a healthy and responsible religious information ecosystem.

Developments in artificial intelligence and social media algorithms have also influenced the distribution of hadith. Algorithms tend to display content with high engagement rates, rather than based on its scientific validity. This results in certain hadith content appearing more frequently on users' homepages even though it has not been academically verified. On the other hand, technology can also be leveraged to build a digital-based hadith verification system. Developing an integrated digital hadith database can help the public access more valid information. Therefore, technology presents not only a challenge but also an opportunity in modern hadith studies. Appropriate use of technology can strengthen the authenticity of hadith dissemination on social media.

From a socio-religious perspective, the dissemination of hadith on social media has a broad impact on shaping people's religious understanding. Invalid information can trigger misunderstandings, debates, and even social conflict in the digital space. On the other hand, hadith conveyed correctly can be an effective means of education and da'wah. This demonstrates that the quality of information significantly determines its impact on society. Therefore, a critical approach is needed to understand any circulating hadith content. This awareness is crucial for building a digital society that is both religious and critical. Thus, social media can be a means of strengthening Islamic values, which are rahmatan lil 'alamin (blessing for the universe).

Based on this description, it can be concluded that the dissemination of hadith on social media is a complex phenomenon involving technological, social, and religious aspects. The main challenges lie in low digital hadith literacy and minimal verification of

information before dissemination. Therefore, an in-depth study is needed on how hadith are understood, disseminated, and consumed in the digital space. This research is crucial for contributing to the development of contemporary hadith studies. Furthermore, it is hoped that this research can serve as a reference for strengthening digital religious literacy. Thus, the dissemination of hadith in the digital era can be more focused, accurate, and responsible.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with library research (Muhammad Mustofa, 2023). This study was conducted by reviewing various literature sources relevant to the topic of hadith and social media in the digital era, such as books, scientific journal articles, proceedings, hadith books, and credible digital sources. The data in this study were not obtained through field observations or interviews, but rather through the search and review of scientific documents related to the research focus. This approach was used to deeply understand the concepts, theories, and findings of previous research related to the dissemination of hadith on social media. Therefore, this study is descriptive-analytical, focusing on the conceptual depiction and analysis of phenomena.

Data collection was conducted through documentation, systematically collecting, reading, and reviewing various relevant literature (Huberman & others, 2019). Data sources were analyzed using content analysis techniques, grouping data based on specific themes such as the authenticity of hadith, digital literacy, and the challenges of disseminating religious information on social media. The classified data was then interpreted to identify patterns and relationships between concepts discussed in the literature. The analysis process was conducted inductively to generate general conclusions based on the data studied specifically. With this method, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of hadith in the digital space.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A form of disseminating hadith through social media in the digital era

1. Visual Content (Infographics/Digital Posters)

The dissemination of hadith in the form of visual content such as infographics and digital posters has become a dominant form of religious communication on social media. This format relies on the power of graphic design to convey the message of the

hadith concisely, engagingly, and easily understood by the audience. Hadith are typically presented as short quotations against aesthetically pleasing Islamic visual backdrops, thereby increasing user interest in reading and sharing them. This visual medium perfectly aligns with the characteristics of a digital society, which tends to prefer quick information that doesn't require lengthy reading. Therefore, hadith infographics are an effective tool for preaching in reaching a wide audience.

packaging often ignores the academic aspects of the hadith itself. Many content pieces only display excerpts of hadith text without citing biblical sources, sanads, or assessments of authenticity. This leads audiences to accept hadiths directly as truth without any scientific critique. While this simplification contributes to the effectiveness of message dissemination, it also opens up the possibility of misunderstanding. As a result, unverified hadiths can spread widely and be considered equivalent to authentic hadiths. This situation demonstrates the tension between the aesthetics of digital communication and the scholarly authority of hadith.

2. Chain Message (Broadcast Message)

The model for spreading hadith through chain messages on digital messaging apps like WhatsApp demonstrates the characteristics of very rapid and spontaneous information distribution. Hadith are typically sent in short texts accompanied by moral messages, calls to goodness, or specific religious warnings. The forwarding mechanism allows a single message to spread to numerous groups and individuals in a matter of seconds. This pattern makes hadith part of the daily flow of communication in digital society without formal boundaries. Thus, chain messages have become one of the primary channels for disseminating religious information in the modern era.

However, the rapid spread of this information is not matched by adequate content validation mechanisms. Many hadith circulating through chain messages lack primary source references or scientific explanations from scholars. In fact, in some cases, hadith lacking strong foundations are still widely circulated because they are perceived as having motivational value. This suggests that emotional aspects often outweigh scientific verification. As a result, the public is likely to accept inaccurate religious information as part of authentic Islamic teachings. This situation emphasizes that broadcast messages are a highly vulnerable medium for hadith disinformation.

3. Short Video Content

The use of short videos as a medium for disseminating hadith has become a prominent phenomenon in today's digital era. Platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts provide a platform for Muslim preachers, content creators, and influencers to convey hadith in concise yet powerful audiovisual formats. Hadith are typically delivered through direct narration, complemented by communicative verbal expressions and engaging visuals. This approach makes hadith more easily accepted by the younger generation, who are accustomed to fast-paced and interactive content. Therefore, short videos have become one of the most effective da'wah media for reaching digital audiences.

However, the limited duration of short videos often results in a simplification of the content of the hadith itself. Explanations regarding the historical context, the reasons for wurud (religious rites), and the level of authenticity of the hadith are often incomplete. This results in the audience receiving only a superficial message without a deeper understanding. Furthermore, not all video content includes clear scientific references, making the validity of the hadith often uncertain. This situation demonstrates that effective communication in short videos must be balanced with academic rigor to avoid obscuring the meaning of the hadith.

4. Digital Preaching Account

The existence of digital da'wah accounts on social media has become a key driver in the dissemination of hadith in the modern era (Kahfi et al., 2024). These accounts are managed by various parties, from individuals and communities to religious institutions, aiming to spread Islamic values widely. Through consistent posting, these accounts share hadith in various formats, such as text, images, and videos, tailored to current societal issues. This strategy makes hadith part of a broader and more dynamic public conversation. With the support of digital platform algorithms, the reach of da'wah has become even greater, transcending geographical boundaries.

The quality of hadith content disseminated by digital da'wah accounts is not always uniform. Some accounts are professionally managed with a strong literature base and clear scientific references. On the other hand, there are also accounts that disseminate hadith without adequate academic verification, potentially leading to misunderstandings. This difference in quality creates challenges for the public in

distinguishing between valid and invalid information. Therefore, digital da'wah accounts function not only as a dissemination medium but also as a space that requires a high level of scientific responsibility.

5. Repost and Copy-Paste Content

Reposting and copy-pasting are among the simplest yet most widespread mechanisms for the spread of hadith on social media (Hervik, 2018). Many users spontaneously reshare hadith content they find without verifying its source or authenticity. This process creates a domino effect, allowing a single piece of information to spread across multiple social networks in a very short time. In this context, social media users are not only recipients of information but also agents of distribution. As a result, hadith can spread organically without clear institutional control.

The ease of reposting also opens up space for the spread of inaccurate information. Hadith that are weak or even lacking scientific basis can spread widely simply because they are perceived as having positive moral value. Furthermore, changes in wording or loss of original context often occur in the repeated copy-pasting process. This results in a distortion of the meaning of the hadith, which can influence public religious understanding. Thus, the practice of reposting without verification is a major factor in the increasing risk of hadith misinformation in the digital space.

6. Integration in Motivational and Educational Content

In the digital era, hadith are often integrated into motivational and educational content widely circulated on social media (R. G. Putra et al., 2024). Content creators use hadith as a moral foundation to reinforce inspirational messages related to everyday life. Frequent themes include patience, sustenance, morality, family, and the spirit of life, presented in a light and easy-to-understand manner. This integration makes hadith more relatable to modern society because it is directly linked to social realities. Thus, hadith are understood not only as religious texts but also as sources of practical inspiration.

The use of hadith in motivational contexts is not always accompanied by adequate scientific explanation. Much content only displays fragments of hadith without citing their source, degree of authenticity, or historical context. This has the potential to obscure the original meaning of the hadith and diminish the depth of

academic understanding. In some cases, hadith are also freely used to reinforce certain narratives without considering their validity. This situation demonstrates that the integration of hadith in educational content must be carried out with caution to maintain adherence to Islamic scientific principles.

7. The Algorithmic Spread of Social Media

The algorithmic system on social media platforms plays a significant role in determining the distribution of hadith in the digital space. Algorithms operate based on user interaction levels such as likes, shares, comments, and viewing duration, making it easier for emotionally engaging content to gain high visibility (Alvarado & Waern, 2018). In this context, hadith presented in a simple and viral manner tend to spread more quickly than scientific and in-depth content. This creates a situation where popularity often outweighs academic validity. Thus, algorithms indirectly shape the consumption patterns of religious information in digital communities.

Reliance on algorithms also poses serious challenges to the authenticity of hadith dissemination. Content that has not been scientifically verified can reach a very wide audience simply because it has a high level of engagement. Conversely, hadith content that is more academically accurate often receives less attention because it is considered less visually and emotionally engaging. This imbalance indicates a distortion in the distribution of religious information in the digital space. Therefore, understanding the mechanisms of algorithms is crucial for developing more critical and responsible digital religious literacy.

The implications of the spread of hadith on social media for the religious understanding of Muslim society

1. The Occurrence of Expanded Access to Religious Information

The dissemination of hadith through social media has had positive implications in the form of opening up access to vast amounts of religious information for the Muslim community. Hadith can now be easily accessed without the constraints of time and space through various digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. This allows people who previously had difficulty accessing classical Islamic literature to obtain religious information quickly and conveniently. This open access also supports the democratization of religious knowledge, as it is no longer limited to

academics or Islamic boarding schools. Thus, social media serves as a highly effective means of disseminating religious knowledge in the modern era.

ease of access is not always accompanied by adequate quality of understanding. Many people accept hadith directly without understanding the context, sanad, or degree of validity. As a result, the religious information obtained is often partial and not in depth. This can cause understanding of religion to be shallow even though access to information is abundant. Therefore, there is a need for digital religious literacy so that broad access continues to produce correct and responsible understanding.

2. The Increasing Risk of Misinformation and Distortion of Hadith

One of the most significant implications of the dissemination of hadith on social media is the increased risk of religious misinformation. Invalid, weak, or even false hadith can easily spread widely because they lack rigorous scientific verification. In many cases, people are unaware that the information they receive may not come from authentic sources. This is exacerbated by a culture of rapid sharing without double-checking the accuracy of information. As a result, the digital space is highly vulnerable to hadith distortion.

The impact of this misinformation is the emergence of misunderstandings in Islamic teachings among the public. Inaccurate hadith can shape erroneous beliefs and influence daily religious practices. In some cases, differing understandings can even spark religious debates in the digital public sphere. This situation demonstrates that the spread of hadith without scientific oversight can disrupt the stability of religious understanding. Therefore, stronger literacy and verification mechanisms are needed in the Islamic digital ecosystem.

3. Shifting Authority of Religious Science

Social media has brought with it a shift in authority in the transmission of hadith and religious knowledge. While previously scholarly authority rested with religious scholars, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), and academic institutions, the digital space is now also filled with influencers, content creators, and informal Islamic preaching accounts. This has blurred the line between scholarly authority and popularity. Many people trust viral content more than explanations from in-depth

academic sources. Thus, religious authority is undergoing a transformation in the digital age.

This shift impacts how society understands and accepts hadith as part of Islamic teachings. Not all popular content has a strong scientific basis, yet some social media users still consider it a source of truth. This can diminish the role of Islamic scholars as the primary reference for correctly understanding hadith. On the other hand, this situation also opens up opportunities for Islamic scholars to gain a presence in the digital space to remain relevant. Therefore, adapting scholarly authority is necessary to remain the primary source for understanding hadith.

4. Strengthening Digital Religious Literacy

The spread of hadith on social media also has implications in the form of an increased need for digital religious literacy among the Muslim community. The public is required to be able to sort, understand, and verify hadith information they receive from various digital platforms. This literacy includes the ability to recognize hadith sources, understand their degree of authenticity, and distinguish between valid and invalid information. With increased digital literacy, the public is expected to become not only consumers of information but also critical users. This is crucial for maintaining the quality of religious understanding in the digital age.

However, the current level of digital religious literacy in society remains quite varied. Some people are able to critically assess religious information, while others readily accept information without verification. This imbalance leads to a heterogeneous understanding of hadith within the community. Therefore, systematic educational efforts are needed from educational institutions, religious scholars, and religious institutions. By strengthening digital literacy, the dissemination of hadith on social media can have a more positive impact on the religious understanding of Muslims.

5. The Occurrence of Simplification in Understanding Hadith

Another implication of the dissemination of hadith on social media is the simplification of their meaning. Hadith are often presented in the form of short quotes, short videos, or visual posters without in-depth contextual explanation. This leads people to only understand the hadith superficially without delving into its broader meaning. This simplification facilitates communication, but has the potential to

diminish the depth of understanding of hadith scholarship. Thus, hadith lose some of their academic context in the digital space.

This simplification can lead to incomplete religious understanding among Muslims. Hadith, which should have specific historical, social, and methodological contexts, are understood literally and limitedly. Consequently, misunderstandings arise in applying hadith teachings to everyday life. This suggests that the presentation of hadith on social media must be accompanied by adequate explanations to avoid misleading understanding. Therefore, striking a balance between simplicity and scientific depth is crucial in the digital context.

CONCLUSION

The dissemination of hadith on social media has complex implications for the religious understanding of Muslims. On the one hand, social media provides easy access to broad, rapid, and inclusive religious information, thus supporting the dissemination of hadith to various levels of society. However, on the other hand, this phenomenon also presents serious challenges, such as the increased risk of misinformation, distortion of the meaning of hadith, shifts in scholarly authority, and the simplification of hadith understanding without adequate context. This situation indicates that the digitalization of hadith has not only expanded the reach of hadith dissemination but also significantly impacted the quality of religious understanding among Muslims. Therefore, strengthening digital religious literacy, stricter scientific verification, and the active involvement of religious scholars and academics in social media spaces are necessary to ensure that the dissemination of hadith remains in accordance with the principles of authentic and responsible Islamic scholarship.

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